Supply of cement by Pakistan

2049. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan offered to supply cement to India;

(b) if so, details thereof; and

(c) the quantity proposed to be imported from Pakistan and how the quality and price compare with the indigenously produced cement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (b) Cement can be imported from any foreign manufacturer who has obtained license from Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). Thus, there is no restriction on the import of cement if it conforms to BIS quality standards. MMTC Limited, a Government of India enterprise, has already imported around 13,000 tonnes of cement from cement manufacturers in Pakistan.

(c) MMTC Limited plans to further import around 0.92 lakh tonne of cement from Pakistan. The approximate retail price of 50kg bag of imported cement from Pakistan varies from Rs. 200/- to Rs. 220/- as compared to average prevailing price of Rs. 231/- per bag of indigenously produced cement. Imported cement must conform to the quality standards of BIS.

Preference to Indian Products in US

2050. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that American markets have expressed a preference for Indian toys and goods to Chinese ones;

(b) if so, details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to take advantage of the situation and promote exports of Indian products to US on priority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) As per data compiled by Sports Goods Export Promotion Council (SGEPC), export of Indian sports goods and toys to USA increased from US$ 14.57 million in 2005-06 to US$17.99 million in 2006-07, registering an increase of 23.47%.

(c) Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises is implementing programs for the micro and small enterprises including toys industry. Such programs, *inter-alia*, include assistance for participation in international exhibition/fairs, reimbursement for obtaining bar code certification, organizing training programmes for packaging for exports, assistance for technology upgradation under Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (CLCSS), incentives for obtaining ISO/9000-14001 etc. Testing facilities have been created at Regional Testing Centers at New Delhi and Mumbai. Besides, financial assistance is also provided to toy exporters for participation in international fairs and Buyer-Seller's Meet (BSMs) etc. through Sports Goods Export Promotion Council (SGEPC).